



Representative Louise M. Slaughter
Chairwoman, House Committee on Rules
Representing New York's 28th District

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, June 12, 2008

Rep. Slaughter Lauds House Passage of Immediate Relief for Unemployed

Historic Unemployment Numbers Highlight Need for Urgent Action

Washington, DC – Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28), Chairwoman of the House Committee on Rules today applauded passage of H.R. 5749, the Emergency Extended

Unemployment Compensation Act in the House of Representatives. This legislation will provide much-needed relief to 3.8 million unemployed workers while they continue to struggle to find work in the slowing economy. The bill passed 274-137.

Today's legislation was brought to the House floor in response to the national unemployment rate surging from 5% to 5.5% during the month of May, the biggest one-month jump in more than two decades and the highest level in nearly four years.

“Last month's atrocious unemployment numbers highlight the urgent need for immediate assistance to millions of struggling families calling out for relief,” said Rep. Slaughter.

H.R. 5749 immediately provides up to 13 weeks of extended unemployment benefits in every state to workers exhausting the 26 weeks of regular unemployment benefits.

“Families across Western New York are already feeling enough pressure looking for work in this terrible job market and economic climate,” said Rep. Slaughter. **“We cannot allow unemployment benefits to dry up at a time when families are already facing record high food and gas prices.”**

Since the beginning of the year, Democrats in Congress have pushed to extend unemployment benefits as the economy continued to weaken, but have faced continued resistance from the Bush Administration. This legislation will need to be passed by the Senate before it makes its way to the President's desk to be signed into law.

BACKGROUND

H.R. 5749, the Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act

H.R. 5749, the Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act immediately provides up to 13 weeks of extended unemployment benefits in every state to workers exhausting the 26 weeks of regular unemployment benefits.

In states with higher levels of unemployment (six percent or higher), an additional 13 weeks would be available, for a total of 26 weeks of extended benefits.

This relief would run through March 2009 and benefit 3.8 million Americans.

Need for Immediate Action is Real

For five consecutive months the U.S. economy has lost jobs, totaling an astounding 324,000 over that period. The number of people looking for work climbed by 861,000 in the month of May alone, reaching a total of 8.5 million nationwide.

Nearly one in five jobless workers, or 1.6 million people, has been unemployed for more than 26 weeks and is considered long-term unemployed.

The number of long-term unemployed Americans is higher now than when Congress last extended unemployment benefits in 2002.

###